

Hollywood Insider

by Dawn Miller

Mike Gunther has been in the stunt business for over 15 years as one of the industry's premier Stunt/Fight Coordinators and Directors. The Woodland Hills resident has become one of the best in the business, working on such action-laden films as *Elektra*, *Catwoman*, *Kung Pow: Enter the Fist*, *XXX: State of the Union*, and *Underworld 2: Evolution*, and in television for such shows as *Alias*, *Angel* and *Spy Game*.

How would you describe what you do?

MIKE GUNTHER: I design action for films, television, commercials and video games, starting as a professional fighter and graduating to Stunt/Fight Coordinator, Director and now pioneering a new category for writing specialists—Action Designing.

How did you get into your line of work?

and the fact that this industry and its long hours can be hard on relationships.

Most exhilarating stunt?

For the movie *Zoolander*, I did a full body burn (completely on fire) with a gas station blowing up just feet away from me. Wow!

What do you like to do outside of work?

Surf! Anywhere where the water is warm. Malibu and La Jolla are some of my favorite spots.

What projects are you currently working on?

The Death and Life of Bobby Z with **Paul Walker**. I'm working as 2nd Unit Director.

What's your passion?

Action Designing. I feel strongly that the people who write for the action genre should have the ability to execute the action. I recently sold my first action script, titled *K.I.A.*, and earned my

I began my career as a professional fighter with the **North American Sport Karate Association (NASKA)** and as a nationally ranked martial artist in the **National Blackbelt League (NBL)**. I worked on commercials, got on a series (*Babylon 5*, then *LA Heat*), which led to the world of feature films.

How can readers of Entertainment Today get in your line of work?

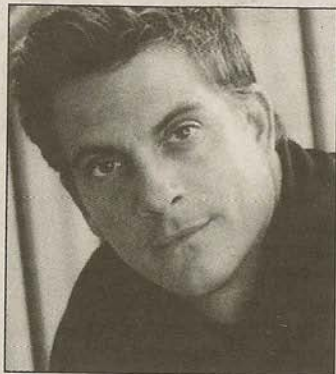
My advice is whatever your craft or skill (i.e. filmmaker, fighter, car driver), work on your fundamentals. As with any career, be proficient in a few areas so that you can be more attractive to employers.

What is your biggest triumph?

Making a living doing what I love to do and something I wanted to do since I was a kid.

Biggest regret?

Not starting sooner with the action designing



WGA card. I am confident that this new genre of action designing will be a safer and more cost effective way to deliver the most impressive action possible.

What can we expect to see from you in the near future?

I'm creating and producing an action pilot for **MTV**. Stay tuned!